

LOOTING, Plunder, & Destruction Zionist Quotes

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BASED On Declassified Israeli Documents & Personal Diaries

The PLUNDER and LOOTING of Palestinian homes, farms, plantations, banks, cars, ports, railroads, schools, hospitals, trucks, tractors, etc. in the course of the 1948 war were a crime on a massive scale. For example, the looting of Lydda City was described by the Israeli Ministerial Committee for Abandoned Property in mid-July, 1948:

"From [Lydda](#) alone, the army took out 1,800 truck-loads of property." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 69)

It should be noted that the great majority of the Palestinian people have been dispossessed for the past five decades, meanwhile, their properties are being used by mostly European Jews (who were victims of similar war crimes committed by anti-Semitic Europeans). Prior to being ethnically cleansed in 1948, the Palestinian people owned and operated 93% of Palestine's lands, and contributed up to 55-60% of its national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

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- Map: [Distribution of Palestinian and Zionist land ownership as of 1945](#)
- [Looting, Looting, & MORE Looting](#) by Tom Segev (the renowned Israeli journalist-historian)

Famous Quotes

[Ben-Gurion](#) was dismayed by the large "mass robbery" of Palestinian properties by the citizens of the "Jewish state". He said in a Cabinet meeting:

"The ONLY thing that surprised me, and surprised me bitterly, was the discovery of such moral failings among us [Jews], which I had never suspected. I mean the mass robbery in which all parts of [the Jewish] population participated." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 69)

During the 1948 war, the Military Governor of Jerusalem, Dov Yosef, wrote [Ben-Gurion](#) describing the "looting" of Palestinian properties:

"The looting is spreading once again. ...I cannot verify all the reports which reach me, but I get the distinct impression that the commanders are not over-eager to catch and punish the thieves. ...I receive complaints every day. By way of example, I enclose a copy of a letter I received from the manager of the Notre Dame de France (a monastery). Behavior like this in a monastery can cause quite serious harm to us. I've done my best to put a stop to the thefts there, which are all done by soldiers, since civilians are not permitted to enter the place. But as you can see from this letter, these acts are continuing. I am powerless." Ben-Gurion promised he would discuss with Moshe Dayan the possible measures to be adopted in order to put an end to the robbery. The subject troubled him greatly. Prior to the occupation of Nazareth he ordered Yadin to "use submachine guns on the soldiers if he saw any attempt at robbery." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 70)

On April 8-9 1948 [Ben-Gurion](#) told Mishmar Ha'emek representatives to burn and destroy the neighboring villages, he said:

"[They] said it was imperative to expel the Arabs [in the area] and to burn the villages. For me, the matter was very difficult. [But] they said that they were not sure [the kibbutz could continue to exist]

if the villages remained intact and [if] the Arab inhabitants were not expelled, for they [i.e. the Palestinian Arabs villagers] would [later] attack them [i.e. Mishmar Ha'emek]." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 116)

"They [Mishmar Ha'emek people] faced a cruel reality ... [and] saw that there was [only] one way and that was to expel the Arab villagers and burn the villages. And they did this. And they were the first to do this." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 116)

[Ben-Gurion](#) was told on February 7, 1948 that "Jews have no land in the Jerusalem corridor", he arrogantly replied:

"The war will GIVE us the land. The concept of 'ours' and 'not ours' are ONLY CONCEPTS for peacetime, and during war they lose all their meaning." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 170 & [Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), p. 180)

In a similar vein, [Ben-Gurion](#) asked [Yosef Weitz](#) in early February 1948 whether the Jewish National Fund (JNF) was ready to buy "from him" land at 25 Palestinian Pounds per dunam. Weitz replied:

"if the land is Arab [owned] and we will receive the deed of property and possession - then we will buy. Then he [i.e., Ben-Gurion] laughed and said: [DEED](#) of property - no possession-yes."

The next day, Weitz and Granovsky lunched with Ben-Gurion. who restated his:

"plan . . . Our army will conquer the Negev, will take the land into its hands and will sell it to the JNF at 20-25 Palestinian pounds per dunam. And there is a source . . . of millions [of pounds]. Granovsky responded jokingly that we are NOT LIVING in the Middle Ages and the army does not steal land. After the war the bedouins [of the Negev] will return to their place---if they leave at all--and will get [back] their land."

A week later, Ben-Gurion suggested to Weitz that he divest himself of:

"conventional notions . . . In the Negev we will not buy land. We will conquer it. You are forgetting that we are at war." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 170)

It is not only that Ben-Gurion envisioned war as an instrument to change the demographics picture in favor of the Jewish minority, he also envisioned war as a tool to dispossess Palestinians and raise "millions" of pounds in capital.

On June 16, 1948, there were calls by members of the MAPAM party for the return of [Jaffa's](#) "peace minded" Palestinian refugees, and in response, [Ben-Gurion](#) stated during a Cabinet meeting:

"I do not accept the version [i.e. policy] that [we] should encourage their return. . . I believe we should prevent their return . . . We must settle Jaffa, Jaffa will become a Jewish city. . . . The return of [Palestinian] Arabs to Jaffa [would be] not just foolish." If the [Palestinian] Arabs were allowed to return, to Jaffa and elsewhere, " and the war is renewed, our chances of ending the war as we wish to end it will be reduced. . . . Meanwhile, we must prevent at all costs their return," he said, and, leaving no doubt in the ministers' minds about his views on the ultimate fate of the [Palestinian] refugees, he added: "I will be for them not returning after the war." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 141 & [1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 75)

[Moshe Smilansky](#) described the looting that gripped citizens of the "Jewish state" from the whole spectrum of the Israeli society during the 1948 war:

"The urge to grab has seized everyone, Individuals, groups and communities, men, women and children, all fell on the spoils. Doors, windows, lintels, bricks, roof-tiles, floor-tiles, junk and machine parts. ..." He could have also added to the list toilet bowls, sinks, faucets and light bulbs. ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 70)

During the course of the 1948 war, reports of [WAR CRIMES](#) perpetrated by the Israeli soldiers reached the Israeli Cabinet. Such atrocities shocked [Aharon Cizling](#), and during a Cabinet meeting he said:

"I've received a letter on the subject. I must say that I have known what things have been like for some time and I have raised the issue several times already here. However after reading this letter I couldn't sleep last night. I felt the things that were going on were hurting my soul, the soul of my family and all of us here. I could not imagine where we came from and to where are we going. . . . I often disagree when the term Nazi was applied to the British. I wouldn't like to use the term, even though the British committed Nazi crimes. But now Jews too have behaved like Nazis and my entire being has been shaken. . . . Obviously we have to conceal these actions from the public, and I agree that we should not even reveal that we're investigating them. But they must be investigated. . . ." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 26)

On June 16 1948 [Aharon Cizling](#) spoke at length about the destruction of the Palestinian villages in a cabinet meeting :

"[Destruction of a site during battle] is one thing. But [if a site is destroyed] a month later, in cold blood, out of political calculation . . . that is another thing altogether . . . This course [of destroying villages] WILL NOT reduce the number of [Palestinian] Arabs who will return to the Land of Israel. It will [only] INCREASE the number of [our] enemies." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 163)

[Aharon Cizling](#) went on to describe his dismay at the looting of Ramla City (but not at reported cases of rape). He said:

". ..It's been said that . 'there were cases of rape in [Ramlah](#). I can forgive rape, but I will not forgive other acts which seem to me much worse. When they enter a town and forcibly remove rings from the fingers and jewelry from someone's neck, that's a very grave matter. ... Many are guilty of it." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 71-72)

How wide spread was the LOOTING?

Soon after the 1948 war, according to [Tom Segev](#) (the Israeli renowned journalist-historian):

- [The looting] included a total of 45,000 [homes and apartments](#), about 7,000 shops and other places of business, some 500 workshops and [industrial plants](#), and more than 1,000 warehouses. At the same time, it was necessary to continue harvesting the crops and picking the olives, gathering the tobacco and the fruit in the orchards-a total of over 800,000 acres. ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 69)
- A secret report, written by the Custodian of Abandoned Property tried to explain how people "succumb to the grave temptation of looting," and why. First there was the massive flight of panic-stricken Arabs who abandoned thousands of apartments, stores and workshops as well as crops and orchards. Second, the property concerned was in the midst of the front-line combat area during the transition from mandatory to Israeli rule. This meant there was no stable authority with which to be reckoned. " ...The moral sense of the few who were attacked by the many and managed to survive, justified the looting of the enemy's property," reported the Custodian. "passions of revenge and temptation overcame great numbers of people. Under those conditions only an extremely firm action by the military I administrative civil and judiciary authorities might have saved, not only the property I but also many people, from moral bankruptcy. Such firm action did not take place, and perhaps could not, given the circumstances, and so things continued to go downhill without restraint." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 70-71)
- Years later the Custodian removed the veil of secrecy: "The inspectors found most of the houses broken into, and rarely was there any furniture left," he wrote in his memoirs. "Clothes, household effects, jewelry I bedding-other than mattresses-never reached the warehouses of the Custodial authority. ..." More than 50,000 [Arab homes](#) had been abandoned, but only 509 carpets reached the Custodian's warehouses. The Custodian attributed it all to the "weak ness and greed of many Israelis, who in normal circumstances

would never have permitted themselves to act thus with regard, to other people's property." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 70-71)

- Yosef Yaakobson-an orange grower, and later an advisor to the Ministry of Defense-suggested to Ben-Gurion that he expropriate a [shoe-making plant](#) from its Jaffa owner and turn it over to the shoe-making enterprise Min'al of kibbutz Givat Hashloshah. Ben-Gurion consulted the Minister of Finance and Kaplan expressed the opinion that the private property of Arabs who remained in Jaffa should not be expropriated. Ben-Gurion disagreed; in his opinion only the property found inside private residences should not be expropriated. Yaakobson told him that the army was removing goods from Jaffa property estimated at 30,000 pounds daily. Attorney Naftaly Lifshitz of Haifa informed him that in the banks of that city there were 1,500,000 [Palestinian] pounds in deposits belonging to Arabs. "The banks are willing to turn this property over," noted Ben-Gurion, and so the government, too, took a hand in the division of the spoils. ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 73) It should be NOTED that the cost of building Haifa's port in the mid-1930s was 1,250,000 Palestinian pounds. It should be noted that Haifa's port was the second largest in the Mediterranean after the French port of Marseilles.
- Altogether, between 140,000 and 160,000 immigrants were settled in abandoned homes: in Jaffa some 45,000, in downtown Haifa about 40,000, and in Acre about 5,000. The man who was put in charge of resettling Acre was Mordehai Sarid. "We consulted a map," he later recalled. "I knew which houses I was getting and I worked with engineers to determine what we would do with each apartment. One place needed sinks installed, another required a coat of paint, while other places needed flooring and sewage." The expenses were covered by the Jewish Agency. One day Sarid asked about some immigrants and was told that they were "getting organized." "Splendid," he said, "let them get organized." One of his aides explained what the phrase meant. "They are stealing tables and wardrobes from abandoned houses." As Sarid put it, he was "terribly disturbed"; he summoned the most influential persons among the immigrants and demanded that they all return the stolen property. According to him, "almost everything" was restored. ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 73)

Why on earth did the JEWISH citizens of the "Jewish state" LOOT Palestinian homes, farms, and business?

The Custodian of "Abandoned" properties, philosophically used the Bible to justify the looting of Palestinian homes, farms, and businesses. He stated:

"Indeed, history repeats itself in all that concerns human nature. In our own chronicles it is stated simply and plainly without any circumlocutions: 'But the Children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing' (sacred loot) (*Joshua 7:11*). As you travel through the country today, through the towns and in places settled by new immigrants and demobilized soldiers as you observe the teeming life ...your joy is mingled with sadness, the sadness of the shadow of Achan, who took of the accursed thing." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 71)

How was the LOOT divided?

The sale was conducted by special departments instituted for the purpose, staffed, as much as war conditions allowed, by personnel trained in the principal branches of commerce. Other merchandise was sold through negotiation with merchants or industrialists, depending on the type of materials. According to the Custodian of "Abandoned" properties, Shafir stated:

- "The army had the first choice of any goods and materials it might require. Next were the government offices, the war disabled, the Jewish Agency, the local authorities and public bodies, such as Hadassah." The army also needed most of the workshop equipment such as cabinet-making shops, locksmiths-works, turneries, iron-works, tin-works and the like. Industrial plants which could be operated on their existing sites were leased out by contract,

"whenever possible," according to Shafrir. Plants which no one wanted to lease were sold to the highest bidder. ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 72-73)

- "With the intensification of immigration in the summer of 1948, the institutions which looked after the immigrants themselves began to demand that parts of the city which were still under occupation be made available to them. The property included warehouses and shops from which the merchandise had yet to be removed, as well as fully equipped workshops and plants. In Haifa the inspector's office began to issue apartments to the Absorption Department as early as July. The intention was to proceed through the city, quarter by quarter, allocating the apartments and business premises, after the goods had already been taken out of them. But the order was not followed. Hundreds of immigrant families were sent to take possession of apartments, and this caused confusion both in the collecting of goods and in the distribution of apartments. In Jaffa the situation was considerably worse. A certain part of the city was scheduled to be opened on September 10, and a particular allocation of houses was actually agreed upon-to be given to the Absorption Department, the army, the government officials who had been transferred from Jerusalem, and for the children of the settlements who had been evacuated during the war and who had been living in Tel Aviv schools, as well as to the soldiers' families. The Tel Aviv Absorption Department ignored this agreement and went ahead and organized a mass invasion of hundreds of families. ..before the date that was originally agreed upon for the opening of the city to civilians. The government appointed a committee to handle the distribution of apartments in Jaffa. The committee met and reached authoritative conclusions. But once again no heed was paid to the proper agreement. This time the social welfare officers sent hundreds of soldiers' families. Thus the populating of Jaffa was achieved by continuous invasions and counter-invasions [of unauthorized immigrants]." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 75-76)

Was there ROMANCE in LOOTING?

By established custom, whoever succeeded in placing a bed in a room and spending the night in it, acquired the right of possession. One day Avraham Am salem, age 19, entered the house of Mohammed Abu Sirah in the [Ajjami](#) [in Jaffa] quarter, and, threatening the Arab with his submachine gun, invaded and occupied the hallway of his house. The man was brought to trial and in court he explained that he was about to get married and had nowhere to live. He was sentenced to five days in prison. A few weeks previously, a few score soldiers, some of them disabled, invaded Arab houses in [Wadi Nisnas](#) and Abbas Street in Haifa. Carrying arms, they appeared at six o'clock in the morning, and forcibly ejected the residents. Then they threw out their belongings and brought in their own. The police came and removed them, but by evening they had invaded other people's homes. They, too, had nowhere to live. ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 76) We really CANNOT wait to see Hollywood and Steven Spielberg direct and finance a movie to portray such a romantic story.

Was there any dispute on who LOOTED what?

In the Knesset debate about the work of the Custodian, Yaakov Gil, MK, of the centrist General Zionists, claimed that 90 percent of the abandoned property was being given to members of the MAPAI. He stated:

"Other parties, and ordinary Jews who belong to no party," he said, "are left out and have received no benefit from this property. The Custodian handles the property as he pleases, to suit himself and the party of which he belongs, his friends and associates. . . . The entire country has become a single *Poltibureau*." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 83) Can't we all just get along, what is the difference. Loot is a loot, aren't we all "Chosen People" in front of almighty, praise the lord!

Wasn't it enough to LOOT the Palestinian refugees?

Looting Palestinians' homes, farms, and businesses was not enough for the "Jewish state," it also formulated a bizarre new law to loot the properties of the Muslim & Christian Palestinians who became citizens of the "Jewish state" after the 1948 war. In the early 1950s, the Israeli government enacted the "Law of Present Absentees", which is an oxymoron by definition, to loot the properties of the internal Palestinian refugees who were not ethnically cleansed so as to be outside the "Jewish state."

It's worth quoting the Custodian of the Abandoned Properties, M. Porat, who sent a secret report to the Minister of Finance in September 1951, he wrote:

"The fact that we are holding the property of legal residents of the country, who otherwise enjoy all the normal rights of citizenship, is a source of great bitterness and constant agitation among the Arabs who are affected by it. Most of the complaints made by Arabs against our department are made by 'absentees' who see their property in the hands of others and can't bear it. These absentees try by every means to get their lands back, and offer to lease them even at exorbitant rents. In accordance with the general rule originally established. . .our office does not lease the lands expropriated by the government to the present absentees, so as not to weaken our control over the properties in our charge, and this gives rise to complaints and bitterness. Clearly, this policy does not enhance a spirit of good citizenship among the Arabs who returned, and the question arises whether the state, having allowed certain Arabs to come back, or approved their infiltration de facto, should provoke their extreme resentment and expose them to the inordinate incitement of certain political elements. In my opinion, it should not. That is to say-the government policy should make the legal definition of 'absentee' match the normal connotation of the word's meaning, i.e., a person who is absent. That should be the policy. The question remains, how would the policy be applied. It seems to me that at present there is no practical way of carrying out the policy I have suggested, at least with regard to real estate. The number of 'present absentees' runs into the thousands, most of them owners of real estate. There are already new people living on some of these properties, particularly in the border settlements. Any attempt to return the properties to these absentees would, therefore, adversely affect thousands, or tens of thousands, of settlers, not to mention army camps and installations."

To relieve the resentment of the "present absentees," the Custodian proposed that their bank accounts be released to them, and that a way be found to compensate them for their properties. Attorney General Shapira had made the same recommendation long before, though without any illusions: "In the end we shall both pay compensation and still be considered thieves," he predicted in August 1949. And so it was. The government offered the compensation to only a few of the property owners and its offers were hardly tempting. Only a few accepted them, and the compensation was generally viewed as unfair. ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 82-83)

According to Shai (Israeli Internal intelligence) commander Levy reported on April 12, 1948 that the occupation of [DEIR YASSIN](#) went as follows:

"The occupation of the village was carried with great cruelty. Whole families---women, old people, children---were killed, and there were piles of dead [in various places]. Some of the prisoners moved to places of incarceration, including women and children, were murdered viciously by their captors." In a report the following day, Levy added: "LHI [Stern Gang lead by Yitzhak Shamir] members tell of the barbaric behavior [*Hitnahagut barbarit* in Hebrew] of the IZL [Irgun gang lead by [Menachem Begin](#)] toward the prisoners and the dead. They also relate that the IZL men raped a number of [Palestinian] Arab girls and murdered them afterward (we don't know if this is true)." The Shai operative who visited Deir Yassin hours after the massacre, Mordechai Gichen, reported on April 10, 1948: Their [i.e., the IZL?] commander says that the order was: to capture the adult males and to send the women and children to Motza. In the afternoon [of April 9, 1948], the order was changed and became kill all prisoners. . . . The adult males were taken to town in trucks and paraded in the city, then taken back to the [village] site and killed with rifle and machine-gun fire. Before they were put on the trucks, the IZL and LHI men searched the women, men, and Children [and] took from them all the jewelry and STOLE their money. The behavior toward them was especially barbaric

[and included] kicks, shoves with rifle butts, spitting, and cursing (people from [the Western Jerusalem neighborhood of] Giv'at Shaul took part in the torture).

It must be emphasized that the Israeli mainstream usually singles out LHI and IZL with war crimes atrocities, yet the Haganah had the lion's share of other suppressed war crimes. For example, the Haganah made great effort to hide its part in the attack (like approving it on April 9, 1948, supplying machine gun cover and two Palmah squads in armored cars) which occupied Deir Yassin, and during the following decades, Menachem Begin's Herut Party and its successor, the Likud, were continually berated for Deir Yassin in internal Israeli political squabbling. ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 205-206)

Soon after the 1948 war, Yosef Lamm, Member of Knesset (MAPAI) stated:

"None of us behaved during the war in a way we might have expected the Jewish people to behave, either with regard to property or human life, and we should all be ashamed." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 71)

During the course of the 1948 war, [Ben-Gurion](#) ordered an inspection of all the kibbutzim and moshavim (villages) of Lower and Upper Galilee for an inventory of:

"flocks [[cattle](#), [abandoned sheep](#)], and other property 'taken' from the Arab villages during the war and after; crops, furniture and all other objects, were to be presented to the Minister of Defense." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 74)

In September 1948 [Ben-Gurion](#) informed the Ministerial Committee for Abandoned Property that the commander of the central front, Tsvi Ayalon, considered it necessary "to demolish partially" 14 Arab villages, for reasons of security, Ben-Gurion wrote:

"As it is extremely difficult to convene the committees," wrote his ministers, "would you please let me have your opinion [on the destruction of Arab villages] in writing. I shall await your answer within three days. ... Lack of response will be viewed as consent." The ministers demanded further information. In September 1949 the Cabinet debated the destruction of the old city of Tiberius. Yigael Yadin (the chief of staff) was quoted as recommending that the entire city, except for the holy places, be destroyed, in order to prevent the Arab residents from returning. ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 84-85)

[Aharon Cizling](#) wrote Ben-Gurion about the looting frenzy which has gripped the Israelis (civilians and soldiers) :

"Again and again in our meetings we discuss the issue of the abandoned property. Everyone expresses shock, bitterness and shame, but we have yet to find a solution. ...up to now we have dealt with individual looters, both soldiers and civilians. Now, however, there are more and more reports about acts which, judging by their nature and extent, could only have been carried out by (government) order. I ask. ...on what basis was the order given (I hear it has been held back to dismantle all the water pumps in the Arab orange groves). ...If there is any foundation to the reports which have reached me, the responsibility rests with a government agency....Meanwhile, private plundering still goes on, too." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 73-74)

The Palestinian properties in the villages were divided in much the same way as in the towns and cities. While the war was still going on, Levi Shkolnik (Eshkol), head of the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency, went on a tour of the Palestinian villages which has recently been ethnically cleansed. As he put it, he saw

"the traces of what had been and was no longer" --- the houses broken into, plundered and burned. "The sight sank through my eyes and nostrils into my head, brain, blood, and heart . . . " One day, in the latter half of 1948, Eshkol drove up to Jerusalem. With him were his driver and Raanan Weitz, his aide. They passed near [Birieh](#), a little village perched on top of a rocky hill southeast of [Ramlah](#),

overlooking the road to [Latrun](#). "I did not know the details, yet" he related later, "but I believed that the desolate and abandoned place might solve the problem of settling the nation." He stopped the car and he and Weitz went for a walk through the village. As they proceeded to Jerusalem they drew up a plan. Eshkol related, "That evening I . . . sent for the engineers, asked the Engineer Corps for assistance and began to turn the great wheel which enabled us that very winter to transform more than 45 abandoned villages into lively new settlements." ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 83-84)

On June 16, 1948 [Yosef Weitz](#) noted in his diary while watching the destruction of a Palestinian village ([al-Mughar](#)):

"Three tractors are completing the destruction. I was surprised nothing moved in me at the sight . . . no regret and hatred, as this is the way of the world. . . . The dwellers of these mud-houses did not want us to exist here." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 162 & [Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), p. 190)

And on the same date too, [Yosef Weitz](#) reported to [Ben-Gurion](#) a progress report of the destruction of the Palestinian towns, he wrote:

"[al-]Mughar, Fajja, Biyar Adas have been destroyed. [Destruction of the proceeding in] Miska, Beit Dajan (east of Tel Aviv), [in] Hula [Valley], [in] Hawassa near Haifa, As Sumeiriya near Acre and Ja'tun [perhaps Khirbat Ja'tun] near Nahariya, Manshiya . . . near Acre. Daliyat ar Ruha has been destroyed and work is about to begin at [al-]Buteimat and Sabbarin." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 162)

In August 1948, a report reached the leadership of the Mapam party describing the destruction of the Palestinian villages based on the instruction of the [Yosef Weitz](#) and the "[Transfer Committee](#)", the report stated:

"The destruction of the [Palestinian] Arab villages has been going on for some months now. We are on the Syrian border and there is a danger that [Palestinian] Arabs will use [the abandoned villages] for military operation if they get the chance. But I spoke to a number of members from [kibbutz] Ma'ayan Baruch and nearby Kibbutzim and I got the impression that there exists the possibility that there is a desire to destroy the villages and [the Palestinian] houses so that it will be impossible for the [Palestinian] Arabs to return to them. A week ago a representative of the JNF [possibly Yosef Nahmani, director of the JNF's Galilee district office and Weitz's agent in the area] came to visit. He saw that in the [abandoned Palestinian] village of [As Sanbariya](#), which is a kilometer from Ma'ayan Baruch, several houses are still standing, albeit without roofs. He told the secretariat of the kibbutz to destroy the houses immediately and he said openly that this will enable us to take the village's lands, because the [Palestinian] Arabs won't be able to return there. I am sorry to say the kibbutz agreed immediately without thinking about what they were doing." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 168)

In late November 1948, [Yosef Weitz](#) recorded that two of his officials at the Jewish National Fund complained that "the army continues to destroy villages in the Galilee, which we are interested in [settling Jewish immigrants]." In that regards, Weitz commented the following month during a visit to [al-Zeeb](#) (north of Acre):

"[The village had been] completely leveled and I now wonder if it was good that it was destroyed and would it not have been a greater revenge if we now settled Jews in the village houses. . . [The empty houses are] good for settlement of [our Jewish] brothers who wandered for generation upon generation, refugees. . . steeped in suffering and sorrow, as they, at last, find a roof over their heads. This was [the reason for] our war." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 169)

As Operation Hiram was being concluded in late October 1948, a Palestinian refugee from [Sha'ab](#) (east of Acre) described his experience as the following:

"The Jews grouped us with the other [Palestinian Arab] villagers, separating us from women. We remained all day in the village [al-Bi'na] courtyard . . . we were thirsty and hungry." Two Palestinian villagers, he recalled, were taken aside and shot dead, and the other Palestinian refugees were robbed from their valuables. Some "200" men were selected and driven off, presumably to a POW

camp. The refugee went on to say:

"It was almost night . . . [The] al-Bi'na mukhtar asked the Jews to permit us to stay overnight . . . rather than travel [northwards] at night with our old men, women, and children. The Jews rejected the mukhtar's request and gave us [i.e., the refugees] half an hour to leave . . . When half an hour passed, the Jews began to shoot in the air . . . they injured my nine-year old son in the knee. We walked a few hours until we reached Sajur . . . We were terrified, the road was full of people in every direction you looked . . . all in a hurry to get to Lebanon." A few days later, after a brief stay in the Palestinian Druze village of Beit Jann, they reached Lebanon. ([Benny Morris](#), p. 227-8)

As the Israeli Army was entering Eilabun (Palestinian Maronite Christian village) on October 30, 1948, the soldiers went on rampage in the village looting Palestinians properties. In a letter dated January 21st, 1949 sent to the Israeli Minority Affairs Ministry by Faraj Diab Surur, the Eilabun's Mukhtar, along with other village notables describing the looting and the ethnic cleansing of their village by the Israeli soldiers as the following:

"When the [Israeli] commander selected 12 youngsters (shabab) and sent them to another place, then he ordered that the assembled inhabitants to be led to [al-]Maghar and the priest asked him to leave the women and babies and to take only men, but he refused, and led the assembled inhabitants--- some 800 in number--- to [al-]Maghar preceded by military vehicles. . . . He himself stayed on with another two soldiers until they killed the 12 youngsters in the streets of the village and then they joined the army going to [al-]Maghar. He led them to [al-]Frarradiya. When they reached Kafr 'Inan they were joined by an armored car that fired upon them [refugees] . . . killing one of the old men, Sam'an ash Shufani, 60 years old, and injured three women . . . At [al-]Frarradiya [the Israeli soldiers] robbed the inhabitants of IL 500 and the women of their Jewelry, and took 42 youngsters and sent them to a detention camp, and the rest the next day were led to Meirun, and afterward to the Lebanon borders. During this whole time they were given food only once. Imagine then how the babies screamed and the cries of the pregnant and weaning mothers."

Subsequently, the Israeli Army looted the Palestinian Maronite village of Eilabun. In early 1949, many of these refugees were allowed back to their homes after relentless lobbying by [Aharon Cizling](#) (the Israeli Agriculture Minister) in the Israeli Cabinet. It is worth noting that these returnees were among the few hundreds to be allowed back to their homes, farms, and businesses, however, the great majority of the Palestinian people are still dispossessed and homeless and have been since the 1948 war. ([Benny Morris](#), p. 229-230)

As the Israelis rampaged through the friendly Palestinian village of [Huj](#) (northeast of Gaza), Yitzhak Avira (an old-time Haganah Intelligence Service officer) registered a complaint against the continued destruction of the village. He wrote Ezra Danin (a member of the 1st and 2nd [Transfer Committees](#) and a Haganah Intelligence Officer) on August 16, 1948 that:

"recently a view has come to prevail among us that the [Palestinian] Arabs are nothing. Every [Palestinian] Arab is a murderer, all of them should be slaughtered, all the [Palestinian] villages that are conquered should be burned . . . I . . . see a danger in the prevalence of an attitude that everything of theirs should be murdered, destroyed, and made to vanish."

Danin Answered: "War is complicated and lacking in sentimentality. If the commanders believe that by destruction, murder, and human suffering they will reach their goal more quickly---I would not stand in their way. If we do not hurry up and do [things]---our enemies will do these things to us." ([Benny Morris](#), p. 167)

It is worth noting that Palestinian inhabitants of Huj had collaborated openly with the Haganah and the Israeli Army before and during the 1948 war. However, such good will did not save them from being ethnically cleansed. Similarly, [Zarnuqa](#) (the hometown of the Islamic Jihad founder [Fathi al-Shikaki](#)) inhabitants had a comparable experience with the Israelis, and paid the price of their collaboration by being driven out of their village under the threat of the gun towards the neighboring

village of [Yibna](#). Sadly, Yibna's people, who were not yet occupied, drove them back to the Israeli occupied [Zarnuqa](#). In a nutshell, they became unwanted people by both sides camping in the wadis between the two towns. This is a typical story of collaborators who outlive their usefulness. (See [Benny Morris](#), p. 127 for details)

Soon after the 1948 war, the total value of Israeli exports in 1949 was a mere 40 million dollars. Israel's principal exports were citrus fruit and cut diamond, which between them accounted for 80% of the exports in 1949 ([1949, The First Israelis](#), p. 297). It is worth noting that Palestinians owned and operated the vast majority of [Jaffa's](#) famous citrus including citrus plantations, [packaging](#), and exporting to Europe, [click here](#) for proof. Happy Loot!!!

According to [Benny Morris](#), the renowned Israeli historian, the first few days after the occupation of Gaza Strip (during the Israeli invasion of Sinai in 1956) went as follows:

"The Israeli conquest and its aftermath were characterized by a great deal of unwarranted killing, especially of retreating or captured Egyptian soldiers. In all, Israeli troops killed about five hundred Palestinian civilians during and after the conquest of the Strip. About two hundred of these were killed in the course of massacre in Khan Yunis (on November 3) and in Rafa (on November 12). Several dozen suspected *fedayeen* who had fallen into Israeli hands were summarily executed. During and immediately after the conquest, there was a great deal of looting. At least one senior officer, Col. Uri Ben-Ari, commander of the seventh Brigade, was tried and dismissed from his post as a result (an accomplished armored commander, however, he was to be returned to active service in June 1967 and again in October 1973, retiring as a brigadier general). " ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 295) And who said crime does not pay?

A detailed account of exactly how "abandoned" Palestinian property assisted with absorption of the new Jewish immigrants was prepared by Joseph Schechtman, an expert on population transfer who helped create the myth of "voluntary" Palestinian exodus. He wrote in 1952:

"The amount of this property is very considerable: 2,990,000 dunums (739,750 acres) of formerly [Palestinian] Arab-owned land, including olive and orange groves, vineyards, citrus orchards and assorted tree gardens, became totally deserted as a result of the mass [Palestinian] Arab flight. Of this Arab land, 2,070,270 dunums were of good quality, 136,530 of medium quality, 751,730 dunums were poor soil. In addition, 73,000 dwelling rooms in abandoned Arab houses and 7,800 shops, workshops, and storerooms became ownerless in towns and villages." ([Simha Flapan](#), p. 107)

It should be noted that Israel's size is 20,660,000 dunums of which 17% is arable land, and based on the above account, Palestinian owned lands amounted to 60% of the total arable lands. [Click here](#) to view Israel's profile at CIA's Worldfact book. Ironically, often Jews all over the world brag about how Israeli Jews made the desert bloom, [click here](#) to read our response to this argument.

Bank accounts estimated to a total of 5 million Palestinian pounds left in Palestinian Arab and non-Arab banks were frozen by the Israel government. All of this Palestinian absentee property, movable and immovable, was entrusted to an official "custodian." Schechtman went on detail how the property was utilized:

"It is difficult to overestimate the tremendous role this lot of abandoned [Palestinian] Arab property has played in the settlement of hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants who have reached Israel since the proclamation of the state in May 1948. Forty-seven new rural settlements established on the sites of abandoned [Palestinian] Arab villages had by October 1949 already absorbed 25,255 new immigrants. By the spring of 1950 over 1 million dunums had been leased by the custodian to Jewish settlements and individual farmers for raising of grain crops.

Large tracts of land belonging to [Palestinian] Arab absentees have also been leased to Jewish settlers, old and new, for the raising of vegetables. In the south alone, 15,000 dunums of vineyards and fruit trees have been leased to cooperative settlement; a similar area has rented by the Yemenites

Association, the Farmers Association, and the Soldiers Settlement and Rehabilitation Board. This has saved the Jewish Agency and the government millions of dollars. While the average cost of establishing an immigrant family in a new settlement was from \$7,500 to \$9,000, the cost in abandoned [Palestinian] villages did not exceed \$1,500 (\$750 for building repairs and \$750 for livestock and equipment).

Abandoned [Palestinian] Arab dwellings in towns have also not remained empty. By the end of July 1948, 170,000 people, notable new [Jewish] immigrants and ex-soldiers, in addition to about 40,000 former tenants, both Jewish and Arab, had been housed in premises under custodian's control; and 7,000 shops, workshops, and stores were sublets to new arrivals. The existence of these [Palestinian] Arab houses---vacant and ready for occupation--- has, to a large extent, solved the greatest immediate problem which faced the Israeli authorities in absorption of immigrants. It also considerably relieved the financial burden of absorption." ([Simha Flapan](#), p. 107-108)

Elizer Bauer, a member of Hashomer Hatzair and the party's Arabs department, described with outrage what was happening in the field, he stated:

"It is self-evident that war materials must be requisitioned, but everything is being taken---metal, wood, building materials, cars, domestic appliances, sewing machines, etc. After the requisitioning is carried out, regulations are issued not take over the property of the [Palestinian] Arabs who remain in their homes." ([Simha Flapan](#), p. 111)

Similarly, Yaakov Haza, one of the foremost leaders of Hashomer Hatzair and Mapam, passionately condemned the inhumane treatment of the Palestinian Arabs. He stated:

"The phenomenon of peasants fleeing from their land is without parallel and didn't take place [in the war] among the Russians, the Poles, or the Germans. All part of the Israeli public, from kibbutz member to the simplest citizen, are involved and we will pay a harsh political and moral price for what is being done." He referred to the village of [Abu Shusha](#), near his kibbutz, Mishmar Haemek, where every house was familiar to him. There were some provocateurs there, but there are others who remained loyal to Israel, he said. "Why were their houses not spared?" ([Simha Flapan](#), p. 111-112)

After the invasion and occupation of Sinai, Israel came under intense American and international pressure to withdraw during the last week of November 1956. Behind the Israeli Army, on [Ben-Gurion](#)'s instructions, it left scorched earth. All military camps and buildings were destroyed; railway lines were dismantled and carted back to Israel; roads were plowed up and certain areas mined. ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 299)

Soon after the 1967 war, [Moshe Dayan](#) wrote in his memories regarding the ethnic cleansing and destruction of the 'Imwas, Bayt Nuba, Yalu, and big portion of the West Bank city of Qalqilya:

"[houses were destroyed] not in battle, but as punishment . . . and in order to [CHASE AWAY](#) the inhabitants . . . contrary to government policy." ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 328)

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